

A
P O E M
ON THE
VARIOUS SCENES
OF
SHOOTING.

On a NEW PLAN.

By JOHN ALDINGTON,

Of Evesham in Worcestershire,

An Experienced F O W L E R.

Humbly Recommended to the Gentlemen of the GUN.

— — — When read,
Let real Nature blunt the Critic's Eye.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR, and to be had of him
at his House in Evesham; and of J. Pridden, at the
Feathers, No. 100, in Fleet-Street, 1767.

P. O. E. M.

OF THE
VARIOUS
OF

SHOOTING.



BY JOHN

AS ASSISTANT

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

AND

LONDON

PRINTED BY

JOHN

AT THE

Unhappy and bleeding died the Gunner's Son
Before the falling Cannon's fatal Gun

For give the Gunner's Son, and his dear Son
Who gave the Gunner's Son, and his dear Son

A

P O E M

O N T H E

V A R I O U S S C E N E S O F

S H O O T I N G.

L E T not the tender Muse, unnotic'd pass
 The *Gunner's* Cruelty—Soon as the *Scythe*,
 And Sickle keen, have shorn the golden Grain;
 Array'd, in all the Equipage of Death,
 Forth the stern Monster stalks: His motly *Dog*,
 Innate, sagacious, and well train'd, skims o'er
 The languid Fields, and snuffs the hollow Breeze;
 Nor leaves one single Track unbeaten—When near
 The feather'd Crowd, he scents their fleeting Steam,
 And like a sculpter'd Image, stands; his Eyes

B

Dreadful

Dreadful and piercing, direct the Caitif's Steps,
 Where lie the basking Covey. Th' vigilant Sire
 First gives the Alarm, and mounting, Danger screams!
 But, very soon, flat on the crusted Glebe,
 A mangled Victim falls. Th' assid'ous Nurse
 Next takes her fearful Flight, and loudly bids
 Her squatting Offspring leave their dusty Domes,
 And follow her: Swiftly the pond'rous Lead
 O'takes her sounding Wings, and hapless she,
 Shares the same unhappy Fate of her late
 Murder'd Consort. Still stands the wily Dog,
 Stiff pointing—one by one the shudd'ring Birds,
 Who, as their Fear increases, closer lie
 In woeful Plight; urg'd to their last Recourse,
 With Motion slow, the feeble Wing is spread;
 And, as they reeling pass the dubious Air,
 With shatter'd infant Robes, half shorn away,
 Down drop the lifeless Tribes! — Within the Space
 Of less than one short Hour, (terrible to tell!)
 The whole Family are extinct!

——— Nor is
 The timid *Hare*, lodg'd in the full-grown Bush,
 Or slender Shrub, or yellow gossy Fog,
 Or thistly Lawn, shagg'd Furze, or rushy Dell,
 Or

Or Furrow stop'd, secure : Full speed, with Nose
 Brest, th' busy Pointer, sudden smells
 The living Race ; who fluctuate unseen,
 About his Sphere, and bending stands athwart :
 His riven Chops, and rolling baleful Eyes,
 Deep fix his rueful, ghastly Aspect,
 On the shudd'ring Creature's Heart ; that, with
 Quick Palpitations, beats as tho' it would burst,
 O sad perplexed Animal ! — Alas !
 What can She do ? To stay is instant Death ;
 To go the same : The deadly blood-stain'd Brute
 Draws softly, cautious, directly on
 Her guardless Citadel, and routs her thence ;
 The roaring Tube retards her nimble Feet,
 And lays her breathless, bleeding on the Ground.

At last, his Bag well cram'd, he trudges Home
 Elate ; and loudly joyous, long harangues
 The list'ning Family, on *Pompy's*
 Mighty Deeds and Goodness : His lovely Gun,
 His own unequal'd Skill, counts out his Spoils,
 And glories in the Murder of the Day.

Not to relate the hideous Din of War,
 Where fullen Cruelty, (frightful indeed !)

Rob'd

Rob'd in complete Steel, with crimson Horror,
Stalks along the daring Lines, where Thousands
meet,

Far from their native Home, in rueful Conflict;
Man to kill Man; devoid of Malice, stab
Their fellow Creatures, and drench th' sun-pierc'd
wide

Inhospitable Plains, with human Gore.—

The peaceful Muse, shrinks from the shocking Scene;
Agast! which Words were never made to paint.

When this dull Spot rolls near the frozen Poll,
And her inlight'ning Sun peeps dimly thro'
The hazy Chambers of the South; sudden
The howling Winds, loaded with rude *Winter's* Robes,
Begin to visit the drooping Fields; then, from
The joyless gloomy Windows of the North,
By the pale Path of *Cynthia's* borrow'd Rays,
Benighted and benumb'd, the dapple crested
Woodcock comes. Round every trembling Bog,
Or solitary Waste, or bub'ling Stream,
Or lonely Grott, or Forest huge, where deep
Imbower'd th' inoffensive Bird, boring
Labourious, from the porous *Earth*, extracts
Her constant Sustenance, the artful *Spaniel*
Strict researches. ———

When

— — When once upon the Foot,
 Th' alarming Cry is loud as Thunder rais'd,
 And th' poor Animal is like a Felon,
 Scamp'ring from the Hand of Justice, hunted.
 Mark! steady, mark! the nodding Copsie resound;
 Flutt'ring, and half strangled in the thorny Fence,
 Before her clatt'ring Wing, the topmost Bough
 Surmounts; Death o'er takes her hob'ling Flight,
 And drops her dead, upon the friendless Soil.—
 Nor is the *Snipe*, with all his artful Shifts,
 Or rosy bosom'd *Bullfinch*, sweetly ton'd,
 Or hopping, footy-colour'd *Blackbird* safe.

The beaut'ous speckled-fronted *Thrushes*,
 (Loud Choiresters!) whose swelling Pipes are heard
 O'er all the Vills, from distant Grove to Grove,
 Distinct: Thy vile ill-fated Hand, oft' robs
 Their slender plaister'd Domes, rude littering
 In horrid Heaps, their future Hope confounds:
 Or, when they're nestl'ing on the tender Spray,
 In am'rous Mood, or wisely planning Schemes
 Of Temperance, and household Welfare; the Gun,
 The constant, loving, busy Pair divides,
 And inconsolable, chagrin, forlorn,
 A plaintive Widow leaves — For many sad

Revolving Seasons, as uncouth she strays
 Round the dull Grove, and solitary Waste;
 When th' irksom Thought of tender Partner,
 Smitten from her Side, steals athwart her cold
 Bosom, her shiv'ring Nerves convulsive rock:
 The gentle Gales are loaded with her Sighs;
 Slow reeling to some popular Shade, in deep
 Distress she droops, and mourns the live long Day;
 Nor Solace finds, in all the Bloom of Spring.

The early *Lark*, who well before the brown
 Brow'd Night have folded up her dusky Wing,
 Or twinkling Twilight, in pale Gladness clad,
 Soft peeping out her grey Complexion, shews
 To the benighted Wanderer, springs from
 Her mossy Couch, at the first Dawn of Day;
 And all the plummy Race, from Slumbers mild,
 Awakes—awakes, to sweetly join with her
 Melodious Song, as she aloof and bold,
 Soaring on th' spacious Path of Heav'n, treads.—
 These are thy Prey, Oh! steady Tyrant, Man!
 Fell Thief, and Plunderer of all the Globe!

Behold yon spiry *Elm*, bleach'd o'er with Snow,
 And on her yielding Boughs, blank crowding sit
 quaking

Quaking and sorrowful, the sad desponding
 Field-fares; while their full swoln tearful Eyes,
 Upon th' tawny barren Hedge, and bleak Soil,
 Are all in deep Attention fix'd; no harm
 Suspecting, but what the inclement Seasons,
 With its gloomy Aspect threat'ns; slyly
 Cough'd, perdue, in the rough briery Ditch,
 The dreary Gunner takes his deadly Aim,
 Admist a dismal Show'r of rattling Ice,
 And floating Plumage gay, prone to the Earth,
 In murder'd Heaps, the hapless Strangers fall!

The sturdy Boy, now from his sobbing Mates,
 Rudely, relentless, drags with secret Glee,
 Poor *Chanticleer*; and on the rugged Stones,
 With double twisted String, close fett'ring stakes;
 Whether to meet the notty oaken Club,
 With nervous Arm, flung from the rustic Clown,
 Or bellowing Gun, full charg'd with deadly Balls,
 He boldly stands with open Front, and crows
 Regardless! — But O, ye nightly Songst'rs!
 Ye noble Birds! How much I pity you —
 You, that tell the tedious Hours as they pass,
 And rouse the rural Labourer to his Toil;
 That you shou'd thus be tortur'd like the worst

Of

Of Felons, broke on the Iron Wheel,
Is cruel, and inhuman, too great for Words!

When on the Ground, the cold Ground, at
Close of Eve,
(All innocent as Innocence it self)
The tuneful *Linnet*s, are busy picking up
Their scanty Supper ; among the guardless Tribes,
The desperate Ruffain, thund'ring pours
His black Artillery : Huge massy Balls,
Wide tears their tender Carcasses, and lop
Whole Limbs away—Some, perhaps, survive
The bloody Slaughter, tho' keenly wounded ;
And sink, in unfrequented Cells, with Pain
The most acute, to die a ling'ring Death.

How vain the Triumph o'er these feeble Birds !
They, who every Summer's Morn, sit lovely
On the yellow Furze, or spicy spangled Shrub,
Their pleasing Harmony, soft chanting forth,
Sweet as the fragrant Breath of early Spring ;
The rosy-featur'd *Milk-Maid*'s Mind delighting,
As she hies on tow'rds her lowing Care,
To drain from their full Bags, the lucious Streams.
See how her Pastures cuff the Morning Dew ?

Her

Her youthful Blood darts rapid thro' her Veins,
 And strange Emotions seize her trembling Heart!
 Touch'd with a tender, am'rous, rambling Flame,
 She wishful rolls her sparkling Eyes about,
 (Killing to meet!) and wonders at the Cause
 Of all this pleasing Agony : — 'Tis Love!
 Dear Virgin; big throbs thy snowy bosom,
 The fainter Lawn dividing, and naked
 Makes it pant, and heave, and swell upon the Theme;
 That joyful Theme of social Happiness,
 In rural Life, when close united to
 Some rustic Villager. Alone not this
 Fair Nymph, but Crowds of Beings, immensely
 small,
 Who haply sit on every green-ting'd Leaf,
 From human Eye conceal'd, are highly chear'd
 To hear such mellow trilling Tones, and glad,
 With their soft humming Pipes, the Concert swell.

The savage *Beast*, who, in huge Forest, whelp
 A horrid Brood of the most deadly Kind;
 That lurk in Caverns, muff'd with dismal Shades,
 And, nightly howling, load the bellowing Winds
 With Terror! shaking the doleful Desert,
 The mould'ring Oaks, and all their ancient Sons,

D

With

With starting Awe, affect the tender Heart!
 How much dismay'd, the ship wreck'd Sailor stands,
 Whose inauspicious Stars have cast on such
 Inhospitable Shores! To hear the Roar
 Of famish'd Monsters, grimly patrolling round
 The dreary Waste in quest of Food, to satiate
 Voracious Appetites. — What Thought can reach
 The irksome Tumult of his tortur'd Soul
 Lo! how his Fear increases! their fell Paws,
 And Talons huge, are deeply fixing on
 His trembling Flesh; and, like a Torrent,
 Tearing down th' Sluice of Life! — Oh, wretched
 Man,
 But recollect what thou thy self hast done!
 Not twice have *Earth* been wrapt in Darkness, since
 Thy bloody Hand, hard ram'd the mighty Piece
 With desperate, enormous, fatal Ball;
 And, like a Murder stanch, the thun'ring Ruin
 Right level'd at a tender Brother's Heart.
 Thus in this Life, or that which is to come,
 The great and mighty God of *Heav'n* will
 Repay our Cruelties; and justly he,
 Who late no Mercy felt, now for it begs,
 With shrieking, mournful Tone, and is denied.

Now

Now let the Muse, with crimson Blush attest,
 What seems incredible, yet strictly true;
 Man's Nature's fall'n below the proling Herd. —
 Behold the Pistol, resolutely plac'd
 Against his own Bosom: Hark, hideous Noise!
 What sudden Crack, and doleful Groan was that?
 Doleful indeed! and terrible to hear!
 Touch'd by the fatal Spark, th' incentive Grain,
 From Engine pent, forc'd its resistless Way,
 And swift as light'ning, thro' his Vital pow'rs,
 Pierc'd th' rugged Sluge! See — see, out stretch'd
 there lies,
 In horrid Form, dead, and besmear'd with Gore,
 A wretched Animal, to Reason tack'd!
 Coward in Folio, thus to give up his Trust,
 And sink, in Character, below the Brute!

The weeping *Crocodile**, th' dread *Hyeana*†, false,
 The *Ounce*§, the *Bear*, the baleful *Rattling Snake*||;

The

* The Naturalists tell us, that the Crocodile, when he has killed his Prey, weeps over it

† It is said the Hyeana artfully counterfeits the human Voice, and by that Means allures the Negroes from their Huts, and devours them.

§ The Ounce or Lynx, is a wild Beast, spotted all over its Body, and of a very quick and piercing Sight.

|| The Rattling Snake is a very dangerous Creature, and it is reported, there is a certain Power of Attraction in his Eyes, so as to draw Bodies to him and destroy them.

The glaring *Tyger*, and their shaggy King,
 With all their Cruelties, compar'd to *Men*,
 Are harmless : — Keen Hunger bit, and urg'd by
 strong
 Necessity, they kill, and kill to live;
 Nor joy in Death : But, Man, for mere Pastime,
 Strikes from the Light of Heav'n, th' guileless Song-
 sters,
 And gladly saddens all the spacious Fields!

Wrapt in the speary Grass, snug lies the *Quail*,
 In Thought secure ; till swiftly rustling o'er
 The bending Stubble, the crafty *Huntress*,
 His latent winding Tract, thro' every Maze,
 With noisy Joy pursues, and trembling from
 His Habitation drives : — Ah, piteous Bird !
 The globous Ore cuts short his buzzing Pinions,
 And instantaneous brings him wheeling down,
 Wounded and bloody, rolling on the Ground.—
 At such extreme Variety of Woe,
 The conscious Eye must surely drop a Tear,
 Or all its tender Faculties are lost!

When

When tepid Gales refresh the vernal Year,
 First Comers of the fragrant leafy Kind,
 The Snow Drops raise their flow'ry Heads, rich dress'd
 In Ermine Robes, white as the downy *Swan*;
 And, yielding low, with humble Reverence bows
 Submissive, on the curious Gazer's Eye.
 The Primrose gay, with comely Hue appears
 Delightful, glorying in her infant Pride;
 And spreads her spangled Bosom to the Sun.
 The Violet sweet, the starry Daisy fair,
 The yellow balmy nodding Couflip too,
 With stately Livery clad, like Champions strut,
 In double Rows along the smiling Glades:
 Then pleas'd, revisit th' long absent Tribes,
 Our cheerless Mass, to propagate their Race.
 Hark! how they twitter on the sooty Tops,
 And make the Sluggard blush; swift winding down
 The heavy low'ring Dusk, they flying snap
 Their Insect Food sufficient: While, on
 The busy, sportive, inoffensive Birds,
 To try the Goodness of his new-bought Gun,
 Forth roams, robust, the Lubber o'er the Meads:

E

Or,

Or else, perhaps, some trivail Bet depends
 On the nice Shot ; which, if he hits, how poor
 Is the Rejoicing, when the Swallow falls.

Alas ! alas ! — Ye lovely harmless Nations,
 Ye pretty, prating People, What have you done ?
 In what have you offended Man, that Mark
 Of Ruin, your causeless Enemy ? That he
 Shou'd smite your feeble Carcasses with Death,
 And drive them sorely pierc'd in mangled Heaps :
 Nay, worse, big glorying in the bloody
 Massacre, of sweeping, shorn off at once
 Whole Colonies ! — Was it for this Oh, ingrate
 Tyrant, vile relentless murd'ring Fiend ;
 That thou wast taught to smile, and weep, and wear,
 (Ill suiting Thee) the fair celestial Face
 Of *Angels* ? Beneath whose comely Aspect,
 Brooding in black Disguise, lurk every Vice
 Insatiate ! How dreadful to relate !
 Still inly chear'd, to see a Brother's Woe.

In

Inhuman Wretch, those cruel Deeds forbear,
Of Heav'n Pity ask, to touch thy Heart
And let the *Plumy Kingdoms* dwell in Peace!

F I N I S.



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And let the King dwell in Peace
Of his Majesty's to touch the Heart
In the West, which shall be his

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